TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) and (b) The National Centre for Plant Genome Research (NCPGR), New Delhi has been set up on 16.07.1998 as a Registered Society under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860. The Centre has become operational with many research projects under implementation.

(c) Lab-to-field linkages between the Centre and the farmers have been established specially while doing the field trials of transgenic potato. As and when more technologies and products are ready, the interaction would be further strengthened.

(d) The original cost estimates approved were Rs. 1380 lakhs. By the end of March 2002, a release of Rs. 1282 lakhs has been made.

Creation of separate time zones

1901. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 302 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st March, 2002 and state:

(a) what are the findings of the high-level expert committee set up by the Ministry of Science and Technology, to look into the proposal for creation of two separate time zones for the country;

(b) the decision taken by Government on such findings;

(c) whether Government have solved the problem of North-Eastern States with regard to time, faced by those States;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) to (d) The expert committee constituted under Department of Science and Technology considered various aspects of creating two time zones in the country. The Committee came to the conclusion that having two time zones does not solve the problem effectively. Further, this may cause difficulties due to difference in timings for utilities and services such as Airlines, Railways, Radio, Television and Telephone (STD) services etc. Therefore, the

committee recommended that the present system of single time zone may be continued. The committee further recommended that work timings in the eastern States may be advanced by one hour, in order to gainfully utilize the morning hours. This will involve only administrative instructions in this regard by concerned authorities.

(e) Does not arise.

TIFAC workshop

1902. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the views expressed by some leading scientists at a recent one-day workshop organised by the Technology, Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC) pleading for urgent need to promote special rural development related technologies; and

(b) if so, the highlights of views/observations made at the said workshop and the details of plans drawn up, if any, to select critical technologies to provide development directions for rapid growth of the rural economy of the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In order to identify the problems and areas of Science and Technology interventions in the rural pottery sector, a workshop was organised by Technology, Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council in Jaipur on 19th June, 2002. As a follow up action, a meeting was held in New Delhi to finalise the plan of action for rural pottery sector. Actions will be undertaken on specific projects when received.

Loan for modernisation of SAIL

1903. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 433, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 19th July, 2002 and state:

(a) the total amount borrowed by SAIL during the last three years for modernisation of its plants; and